

Russian Cultural Figures Call for Release of Navalny's Body

By [AFP](#)

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Lyudmila Navalnaya and her lawyer seen in the town of Salekhard, where Navalny died last Friday.

Anatoly Maltsev / EPA / TASS

Dozens of Russian cultural figures and activists have called on authorities to release the body of opposition activist Alexei Navalny, who died in an Arctic penal colony last Friday.

After days of being denied access, Navalny's mother Lyudmila said Thursday she had finally been allowed to see her dead son's body, but added that authorities refuse to hand over the body and want to bury him in secret.

More than 25 filmmakers, artists, Nobel Prize winners and opponents of President Vladimir Putin have so far called for his body to be released in videos published by Navalny's allies on social media.

They include Nobel Prize-winning journalist Dmitry Muratov, protest rock band Pussy Riot

member and activist Nadezhda Tolokonnikova, writer Victor Shenderovich and movie director Andrey Zvyagintsev.

Related article: [Navalny's Mother Says Authorities Demanding Secret Funeral for Late Activist](#)

"It's awkward to talk about this in a country that considers itself to still be Christian. Just give Lyudmila Ivanovna her son... without any conditions," Muratov said.

He argued that authorities were trying to keep Navalny in solitary confinement even in death, as they had done for long stints of his three years in prison.

Navalny's supporters have accused Putin of "killing" his most formidable opponent in prison, and they believe authorities do not want to allow a public funeral as it could turn into a rallying point of anti-Kremlin sentiment.

Police have arrested hundreds of mourners at makeshift tributes to Navalny over the past week.

Putin has not yet commented publicly on the activist's death.

"Putin was scared of Navalny for many years," writer and long-time Putin critic Shenderovich in a video address, adding: "Putin is scared of Navalny after his death. After he killed Navalny he's still scared of him."

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